



The cause of a slight oil spill off the Aruba coast a mystery

At 10:20 on Friday morning, October 13, the staff of De Palm Island ordered an evacuation of the island when specks of tar were seen floating in the water. All water activities were halted, the guests' money refunded, and they were transported to the mainland.

The proper authorities, which include BiBi Arends of Aruba's disaster control commission, were immediately notified along with Valero Refinery Aruba, and a helicopter was dispatched to locate the source of the oil. Valero representative David Smith reports that the amount of the oil was negligible and "would not even be termed an oil spill, but in any situation, no matter how small, all preventative and protective measures will automatically be put into motion." Valero personnel were dispatched in boats and the application of dispersants on the isolated spots of oil remedied the situation quickly, enabling De Palm Island to conduct business as usual again on Saturday morning.

A careful examination of the coastline revealed that the oil was only around De Palm Island and no other beaches or coastal areas experienced any effects from the oil. "The cause or source of the oil can only be speculated upon at this time," stated Mr. Smith. He reports that they can see nothing come from any of the refinery facilities, and the likelihood of it having been discharged from a passing tanker and brought to the island by prevailing currents entirely possible. He informed THE NEWS that a committee of environmental experts from Valero and their staff would study the aerial photos to pinpoint the cause, but cannot comment with certainty at this time.

The management of De Palm Island was very complimentary of the decisive action of their staff and the response from authorities so that no detectable damage to beaches or coral resulted. They generously donated all the food that was prepared that day to the Casa Cuna Children's Care Facility in Pos Chiquito.